

nature net

The **NatureKenya** Newsletter

April 2000

WHAT'S NEW!

IVORY TRADE FUNDS LANDMINES

Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) 10- 20 April '00

As many of you already know the ivory trade once again threatens the African elephant.

Between 1979 and 1989 Africa lost over half her elephant population to the ivory trade, a reduction in numbers from 1.3 million to 600,000. In 1989 as an extreme emergency measure African elephants were up listed to Appendix I of the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

A total ban on ivory together with increased security reduced poaching dramatically so that it became almost negligible. The cease-fire on elephants lasted for 10 years.

In 1997 the elephants in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe were down listed to Appendix II and the countries were allowed an experimental trade of 50 tonnes of stockpiled ivory with Japan. This was agreed under the strict condition that a monitoring system would be put in place to study the effect of the experiment on illegal killing of elephants in the rest of the continent. To date this monitoring system has not been put in place.

Unfortunately the experimental lifting of the ivory ban has had a detrimental effect on elephants in the other 30 range states across the continent, and in India. Reports of increased poaching across the continent have been coupled with hard evidence of ivory seizures. The old illegal trade routes are opening up again and ivory is moving. In Kenya alone, the proportion of all elephant deaths due to poaching has risen to 51% (KWS Status of Kenya's Elephants Report, 1999). Although this is nothing close to the slaughter of the 80's, it marks the beginning of a worrying trend.

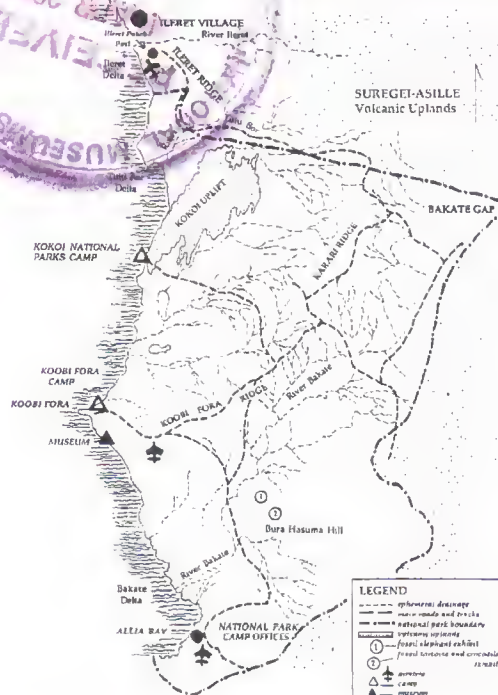
In Central and West Africa where security and monitoring are crippled by lack of funds, the situation is more serious. In the south, Zimbabwe is meant to have strict controls on poaching and movement of ivory has been reported to have 11.25% mortality in the Zambezi Valley Floor and Dande Safari Area.

continued on page 2

TALKS & VIDEOS

Paleo - anthropology Talk

including a tour of the Archaeology Dept. collections



Fossil Sites around Koobi Fora

Monday 10 April '00, 5:30 p.m.

at the National Museums of Kenya,

Archaeology Department, in the Administration Bldg.
past the Louis Leakey statue

SUCCULENTA Talk on Plectranthus

Saturday 1 April, 10:00 a.m.

By **Catherine Lukhoba**, a plant systematist at Nairobi University. Venue: Nairobi Botanic Garden office situated beyond the front of the National Museum on the right hand side as the road goes to the left.

Editor, **Catherine Ngarachu**

Action for Biodiversity Conservation

NATURE KENYA, P. O. Box 44486, Nairobi. Tel: 749957 / 746090 Fax: 741049 E-mail: eanhs@ofricoonline.co.ke



NOTE: Nature Kenya officials will be attending the CITES meeting as observers. Unfortunately it has been difficult to get any definite information on public attendance and daily rates. If you wish to attend any session try contacting UNEP by phone (621234) or email (cites@unep.ch).

continued from the front page

This is between 3 - 8% above the natural mortality rate and indicates a declining population (WWF SARPO report, Dec 1999).

Kenya, who lost approximately 88% of her elephants in the 70's and 80's and India have put forward a proposal to up list all African elephants to Appendix I.

This is because any ivory trade at all signals to the world that it is open season on the elephants and will trigger an explosive demand for ivory in the Far East. If we allow trade in ivory we risk a renewed holocaust on elephants. We have seen this happen before and we must not let it happen again.

Kenya and India need your support. I urge you to do all that you can to help the elephants. In our modern world of 6 billion human beings, 600,000 African elephants is a sad figure. Please help us to save the elephants.

- You can raise funds and send them to the Ele-Action Initiative, c/o Kenya Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 40241, Nairobi, Kenya;
- You can start your own campaign to raise awareness, talk in schools, and get petitions together, lobby conservation groups to clearly state their positions regarding the ivory trade and up listing of elephants;
- Lobby to burn ivory stockpiles;
- You can ask for airtime on television and radio to talk about the elephant issue.

Please look at the Ele-Action Initiative web site for more information at www.burnivory.org or the Kenya Wildlife Service web site at www.kws.com.

Spread the word.
Saba Douglas-Hamilton
saba7@earthlink.net

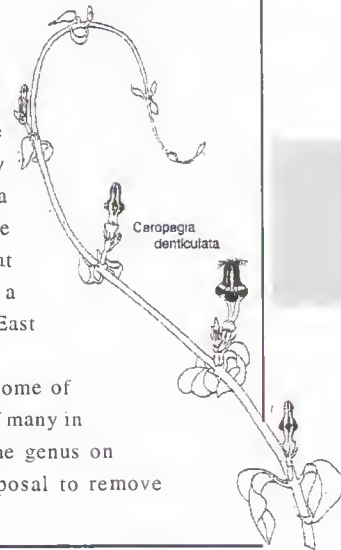
Flora (Plants)

Summary of Proposals for Amendment

There are 21 plant proposals with only one affecting plants in Kenya. This one proposal is to remove all *Ceropegia* species from Appendix II. The genus *Ceropegia* is estimated to have about 200 species occurring in probably more than 50 countries. Most of them are listed as rare or endangered in the 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants.

Ceropegia species were put on Appendix II in 1979 and include all species of *Ceropegia* as a genus worldwide. The proposal to remove them from Appendix II is based on the argument that most of those traded are from artificially propagated specimens. But there are other criteria for listing a species on Appendix II. For instance, when in doubt or not sure of the status of a species, in the interest of conservation of that species which may be threatened by trade, it can be listed as a precautionary measure. This is the case with *Ceropegia* in East Africa where some species are yet to be named.

In Kenya, there are about 30 species of *Ceropegia*, some of which are attractive, and of interest to collectors. The status of many in the wild is not known and it would be preferred to leave the genus on Appendix II for their protection. Kenya, opposes the proposal to remove *Ceropegia* species from Appendix II



Born FreePetition

STOP THE UN FROM LIFTING SANCTIONS ON THE IVORY TRADE

UN may lift sanctions on the ivory trade

The South African authorities are lobbying the United Nations to get sanctions on the trade in ivory lifted. Over the last 100 years the African elephant population has fallen from over 10 million to just 400,000 due to this trade. Elephants are being slaughtered at the rate of one an hour. If the sanctions are lifted this figure will rocket.

Please help to stop this happening by signing the Born Free petition and forwarding this message to:

<http://www.bornfree.org.uk/stoptheclock/petition.htm>

when the number of names listed below reaches 20.

You may also fax your 20-name petition to Nature Kenya, 02 - 741049, and we will forward it by e-mail.

Pancake Tortoise

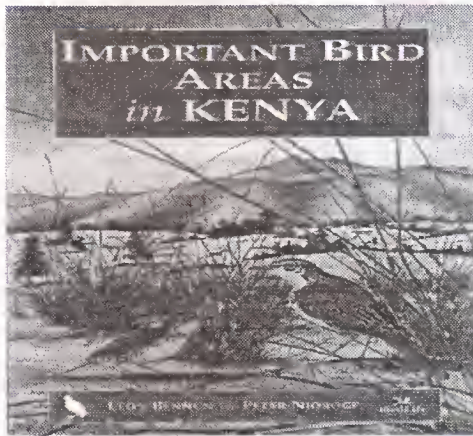
(*Malacochersus tornieri*)

The Pancake Tortoise has a relatively limited distribution in East Africa, from Njoro east to Malindi in Kenya, southward into Tanzania. The distribution has been described as fragmented, discontinuous and irregular. Populations of the Pancake Tortoise are confined to suitable habitat consisting of arid scrub and thornbush thickets with abundant boulders, flat rocks, and rocky outcrops on low hills and savannas at altitudes up to 1800 m. The species has specific micro-habitat requirements that include deep rock crevices that taper back from the entrance to heights of 5 cm, or less and which allow easy access to the ground below. Pockets of suitable habitat are widely separated from one another by expanses of unsuitable and unoccupied habitat. Unlike other animals, pancake tortoises do not wander far from these isolated patches of suitable habitat and populations are thus less capable of recolonizing depopulated areas. In Kenya populations are threatened by clearance of thorn scrub for agricultural purposes. When live specimens are collected for trade their rock crevices are destroyed, causing localized habitat destruction.

The proposal from Kenya is to transfer the Pancake Tortoise from Appendix II (regulated trade allowed) to Appendix I (no commercial trade allowed).

COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS



LAUNCH OF IBA DIRECTORY

Thursday 27 April from 6:00 p.m.

If you would like to attend there are limited spaces available and you will need to book with the office.

The Directory is available from the office @ 1000/-

SUCCULENTA NEWS FLASH

Kenya Horticultural Society Plant Sale

Saturday 8 April, 10:00 a.m. in the Parfitt Garden, 226 Karen Road. KHS and Succulenta members and their friends welcome.

There will be a separate Succulenta section at this sale. Succulenta members, wishing to sell their plants please label and price them and be there in person to sell them. Please bring them on the Friday. Any queries to Carin Parfitt on 882827

ACTIVITIES

EXCURSIONS

LAKE TURKANA SAFARI

18 - 24 April

To answer some queries from participants:

- * Bring your sleeping bag (mattresses are provided and drinking water is available).
- * Bring your own towel, touch, and hiking shoes.
- * Fuel is available at Sigor, 7 kms from Marich Pass and at Lodwar.
- * Vehicles can be parked at the Jade Sea Journeys base at Kalokol.
- * Directions: Nairobi - Nakuru - Eldoret - Iten Road - Kapenguria - Marich.
- * On the first day we will have a coffee/ tea stop at Nakuru but bring a picnic lunch.

Try to attend the Paleoanthropology Talk which will be a good briefing on the sites you are to visit at Koobi Fora.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

TREE WALK

THE APRIL ARBORETUM GUIDED TREE WALK WILL NOT TAKE PLACE AS IT COINCIDES WITH EASTER MONDAY.

POT LUCK OUTINGS

Bird-watching outings held on every third Sunday of the month, i.e. 16 April. Bring a picnic lunch, binoculars, field guides, etc. and meet at 9:00 am at the National Museum car park. Those attending decide on the venue - hence "Pot Luck".

DECLARATION : Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Kshs 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

LOOKING AHEAD

East Africa Natural History Society

Annual General Meeting

Monday 12 June '00 at the Louis Leakey M. Hall

Convention of Biological Diversity, 15 - 26 May 2000

NES Contact: Mr. Ndonge, Mr. Kinuthia, Mr. Masinde, Bruce House, 10th Floor, phone 242569 or 243088

VIDEO APPEAL

Do you have any great action shots of birds, plants, mammals etc. on video or film?

Would you donate some to NatureKenya to be used in a promotional video?

If you can help, please speak to Catherine at the Nature Kenya office.

Pan-African Ornithological Congress

3 - 8 September 2000, Uganda
Organised by Nature Uganda

Congress Objectives

- Further the study of African birds
- Promote the preservation of African birds
- Foster the appreciation of birds
- Information dissemination

Registration Deadline: 30 June

Copies of the Registration Form are available from the Nature Kenya office. Please collect these copies personally or send a self addressed stamped envelope.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FUNDAMENTALS OF ORNITHOLOGY

A course for bird guides and birders
Elsamere Field Studies Centre, Lake Naivasha

27 April - 4 May 2000

Organised by Ornithology Department,
National Museums of Kenya
& Nature Kenya (the East Africa
Natural History Society)

'Fundamentals of Ornithology' is a course designed for birders (both professional and amateur) who want to improve their understanding of birds and their skills in the field. It is an intensive, residential course, on the shores of Lake Naivasha. Teaching will be through illustrated lectures (including discussion sessions and short practical exercises); group seminars, demonstrations. We try to create an informal environment where participants can share their existing knowledge. Participants' progress will be monitored by continual informal assessment. Those who perform to the instructors' satisfaction will receive a Certificate in Ornithology issued by the National Museums of Kenya.

Objectives

Participants can expect to gain the following knowledge and skills:

- (1) Reliable identification techniques that can be applied anywhere
- (2) A solid general knowledge of bird evolution, classification, behaviour and ecology
- (3) A good overview of bird distribution and conservation
- (4) A better understanding of the interests and needs of birdwatching visitors
- (5) The ability to give interesting, detailed and well-rounded background information on birds seen anywhere in the country
- (6) An enhanced sense of professionalism and confidence.

Course fees: 19000/- on first come first served basis.

Registration Deadline: 20 April '00

Contact: Anthony Kuria, Nature Kenya

AFRICAN TROPICAL BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME FIELD TRAINING IN COLLECTION-BASED CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

This year's course will target medicinal plants and those taxa particularly sensitive to forest disturbance: small mammals, birds, amphibians, fish, beetles, butterflies/moths, trees and lower plants.

Note: Successful applicants must be prepared for five weeks of rigorous field training.

The programme is designed for:

1. Those pursuing M.Sc. or Ph.D. degrees in African institutions in the fields of Botany or Zoology, or related fields in Conservation Biology.
2. Professionals in Herbaria, Museums, Universities, Wildlife Management, who have an interest in the documentation of biodiversity and biogeography.
3. Those who have previously participated in the programme.

Eligibility: Participants must be African Nationals from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi or Rwanda with a first degree in the biological sciences.

Application: Interested individuals should supply a letter indicating their interest in at least in one of the above mentioned taxa; experience and career goals, a copy of their university transcript, or other relevant academic qualification, a curriculum vitae and the names (with address/phone/e-mail/FAX) of three professional/academic references. Successful applicants will be informed of the results in mid May, 2000

Fees: Food, lodging and transport expenses within Uganda will be covered, but home institutions of successful applicants must provide transport to their participants to and from Kampala and some out-of-pocket allowances.

Contact: The Programme Coordinator, Makerere University, Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (MUIENR), P. O. Box 7298, Kampala, Uganda.
Phone: 256-077-411278 OR 256-041-540213 Fax: 256-041-530134 email: muienr@imul.com

Dates: 7 Weeks: 10th July - 25th August

Application Deadline: 30 April 2000

UNESCO MAN AND BIOSPHERE YOUNG SCIENTISTS AWARDS

These awards are available to encourage young scientists to use Biosphere Reserves in their research and training.

Awards are set at a maximum of US \$ 5,000 each. Applicants may not be older than 40 years of age.

Priority is given to research undertaken in biosphere reserves, or on the biosphere reserve concept, as well as to interdisciplinary projects focusing on man - environment interactions in line with the MAB Programme.

Application deadline is: 1 May 2000

Application forms for MAB Young Scientist Awards are available from: MAH Secretariat, Division of Ecological Sciences, UNESCO 1, rue Miollis, 75732, Paris Cedex 15, France. Fax: +(33-1) 45 68 58 04, E-mail: mab@unesco.org

More information available from the web site: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/capacity/mys/awarmab.htm>. A list of all the Biosphere Reserves around the world can be found at <http://www.unesco.org/mab/brlist.htm>.

Bird Hotline

9 Piapiac

Feeding on ploughed field beside Kibas Road, 4 kms outside Kisumu/ Mar

Heather Elkins

Hinde's Babbler, Grey - alive Greenbul, Yellow - bellied Greenbul, Martial Eagle, Red - Capped Robin, Banded Snake Eagle, Croaking Cisticola Kindani Camp, Meru National Park/ Mar

Mark Mallalieu, Michael Maina, Jahn Musina, George Eshiamwata

Sanderling, Red-tailed Shrike, Three-banded Plover, Green-backed Heron

Sukari Ranch/ Mar

Louise Fardyce, Pat Dixon, Brian Williams

Juv. and adult Pallid Harrier, Abdim's Stork

Nairobi National Park/ Mar

Jahn Drawley

Senegal Thick-knee, Callared Pratincole, Lichtenstein's Sandgrauze, Hemprich's Hornbill, Barred Warbler, Hunter's Sunbird, Northern Masked Weaver

Lake Baringa/ Jan

Japheth Mwak, Harald Henry, Shailesh Patel